

SVRS Pilot County Processes and Issues

All twenty one New Jersey counties will undergo conversion to the SVRS by the end of 2005. Immediately after successful completion of the SVRS User Acceptance Testing, projected to be completed in mid-September, a select group of counties will undergo final conversion of their data into the SVRS database. Simultaneously, their users will be trained in the operation and administration of the SVRS. Thereafter, they will be in full production under the new system. Operations will be within the production environment, so this is not a "test".

This group of early implementers will be tutored by the training staff, for a prolonged period, as they begin normal operations under the SVRS. Covansys Team staff will also be observing their operations for several weeks, observing for any issues relating to the final conversion and initial production operation of the SVRS. Lessons learned during this period will serve to improve the roll-out process for the remaining counties, after completion of the pilot period. Also, any errors uncovered during the pilot period will be corrected in advance of the final roll-outs.

This document provides a summary of the operations, advantages, and staffing burdens faced by those counties who agree to serve as early implementers (pilot counties).

Advantages and Processes of Pilot Counties

By agreeing to serve as a pilot, counties will enjoy the following operational bonuses over those counties who wait until the final roll-out phase:

1) Early data collection and conversions:

Those counties slated for the pilot group will be moved to the front of all data pulls and conversion activities for all three conversion cycles.

2) Early hardware & network setup:

As the pilot counties will be implemented first, they will be the first to have all new PC's, printers, scanners, bar code readers, and label printers installed. They will receive their county back-up and print servers before the other counties. Any network configuration or installations will be completed in the first group throughout the state.

3) Early training classes and primary input to materials:

Users and administrators within the pilot counties will be in the earliest training groups. They will also help evaluate and improve the training classes and materials for the remaining counties.

4) 4-5 week implementation (rather than 1 week for full-rollout counties):

While the data conversion and training classes for the pilot counties should take no longer than any other county, the on-site mentoring of users by the training staff and the observation of on-site processing by the Covansys staff will extend over several weeks, so any implementation problems or issues can be detected and corrected, prior to the remaining roll-outs.

5) Closer evaluation of issues and problems:

The more intensive observations of initial pilot operations by the Covansys Team, extending over several weeks, will focus on uncovering problems and quickly finding solutions for them. The specific operations within those counties will obviously receive better decomposition than those in the final group, where implementation activities conclude within a week.

6) Prolonged assistance after conversion:

While HelpDesk support of the SVRS will be provided over the entire M&S period, on-site tutoring is given only immediately after conversion at each county and normally only lasts for several days. Pilot counties will enjoy this benefit for several weeks.

7) Documentation of entire process and decomposition of implementation effects:

As a result of the close scrutiny of post-conversion operations, pilot counties will receive a more detailed report of the problems, issues, and results of their implementation process.

8) Positive Exposure throughout the State:

Participating in the pilot group indicates a county's willingness to expend extra effort to make the SVRS project a success. Volunteering for this position helps show these counties as vanguards among their peers.

Disadvantages

In addition to the advantages noted above, pilot counties can expect some disadvantages compared to those counties who wait until the final roll-out of the SVRS. Pilots can expect these distractions:

1) Less structure to the process:

Issues will be uncovered as conversion continues. There will undoubtedly be some surprises. Without the benefit of others' experiences, their implementations may appear to be more difficult than later ones.

2) More apparent confusion:

Pilot counties will encounter more 'bugs', technical and training issues, and procedural questions than later roll-out counties.

3) More pressure:

As there will be closer scrutiny of the processes and pressure to uncover issues quickly, more intensive effort to clean-up the data will be expected. Pilot county staff will most likely be working extra duty to deal with problems encountered after conversion and during the observation/mentoring period. However, as a result, they'll be in production sooner under the SVRS, before the November 8th elections.

4) Operations will be under the spotlight:

With all the attention on the pilot counties, their operations will have higher visibility to the State and other counties. Any problems occurring during the implementation may be perceived negatively.

5) Additional repetitions may be required:

If significant problems do arise, rework or reprogramming may be needed to correct them. Updates to the application may be needed, resulting in additional testing on-site.

Additional Staff Tasking Required of Pilots

While a certain level of effort is expected of every county during their final conversion onto the SVRS, the pilot counties can expect some additional effort and/or tasks due to being first:

1) Reviewing of Training process and materials:

After the initial training classes are completed, those counties will be asked to evaluate the training materials and class curricula for improvements for the final rollout throughout the State.

2) Rapid data clean-up after conversion:

As noted above, the pilot counties will be pressured to quickly clean-up any data conversion problems, so the processing operation can be more closely evaluated.

3) Longer participation in rollout/conversion activities:

The more prolonged participation in the observation period, by itself, implies somewhat more effort and stress to the staff of the pilot counties.

4) More meetings/time spent with SVRS Team members:

As the SVRS team will be on-site for several weeks, the county staff can expect additional time spent in meetings or discussions with them. These additional tasks will detract from the staff's normal duties.

5) Additional post mortem review prior to rollout of remaining counties:

Yet another meeting and discussion period will be scheduled with each pilot county's primary staff members to review afterwards the overall process of their conversion onto the system. Lessons learned will be documented to improve the conversions of the remaining counties.

Projected Timetable (Tentative)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Estimated Dates</u>
User Acceptance Testing	August 22 – September 12
Pilot Hardware Installations	August 29 – September 23
Pilot User Training	September 12 – 23
Pilot Final Data Conversions	September 20 – 26
Pilot sites go 'live'	September 26
Pilot monitoring period	September 26 – October 24
Final Pilot Report and Approvals	October 26 – November 2

These lists may not fully account for all the benefits or issues for pilot counties. However, from an overall standpoint, participation by counties as pilots has been found to be a positive experience for both the counties and the State.

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